



# California Regional Water Quality Control Board

## Santa Ana Region



A  
AES

Winston H. Hickox  
Secretary for  
Environmental  
Protection

Internet Address: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb8>  
3737 Main Street, Suite 500, Riverside, California 92501-3348  
Phone (909) 782-4130 - FAX (909) 781-6288

Gray Davis  
Governor

*The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our website at [www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb8](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb8).*

June 26, 2003

Mr. G.D. Wheeler  
Contractors Cargo Company  
500 So. Alameda Street  
Compton, CA 90221

### **DIRECTIVE TO CONDUCT A RECORDS INVESTIGATION AND SUBMIT A REPORT CONCERNING PERCHLORATE DISCHARGES IN THE RIALTO, COLTON AND CHINO GROUNDWATER BASINS, SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

Dear Mr. Wheeler:

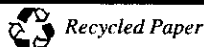
Perchlorate has been detected in municipal water supply wells in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins in Southern California. These water supply wells are located downgradient of the former bunker used by Contractors Cargo in North Rialto. Evidence indicates that Contractors Cargo utilized the storage bunker to store military explosive materials, which may have contained perchlorate salts.

As described below, Contractors Cargo is a suspected discharger of perchlorate. This letter sets forth an order pursuant to California Water Code Section 13267 that Contractors Cargo conduct an investigation of its records of historical operations at the former Rialto facility. As required by that provision, this letter contains an explanation of the need for the report and cites evidence supporting the requirement.

#### Background

Perchlorate contamination was first detected in groundwater in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins in 1997. At that time, the California Department of Health Services (DHS) Action Level (AL) for perchlorate in drinking water was 18 parts per billion (ppb). Two wells had perchlorate levels exceeding 18 ppb and were shut down. In January 2002, the DHS lowered the AL to 4 ppb. In response to the reduced AL for perchlorate, the local water purveyors in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins restricted or eliminated the use of additional production wells with perchlorate concentrations that exceeded 4 ppb (Enclosure 1). Between 1997 and the present, various suspected perchlorate dischargers, including Contractors Cargo, have been identified.

*California Environmental Protection Agency*



Requirement for an Investigation

The Regional Board has directed staff to issue individual letters under California Water Code Section 13267 to suspected perchlorate dischargers. The Board also expressed a strong desire that suspected perchlorate dischargers work with the local water purveyors to provide a supply of replacement water during the loss or limited use of their production wells.

The Need for the Investigation

The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board is charged with the protection of water quality in this Region. We have been working actively with the water purveyors for several years to identify the extent and address the impact of perchlorate contamination on water resources in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins. The water purveyors whose wells have been contaminated with perchlorate now face a state of emergency, and may not be able to provide an adequate water supply to their customers. It is urgent that the sources of the contamination be identified, and the magnitude of the perchlorate plume defined.

Evidence Supporting the Need for the Investigation

A San Bernardino County Planning Commission record dated June 25, 1971 indicates that Contractors Cargo applied to construct and store military ordnance on approximately 10 acres in Rialto (Enclosure 2). Perchlorate is known to be used as an ingredient in certain ordnance and explosives. Other sites involved with ordnance and explosives have had documented perchlorate discharges and contamination (e.g., [www.geotracker.swrcb.ca.gov/perchlorate](http://www.geotracker.swrcb.ca.gov/perchlorate)).

Based on the evidence, Contractors Cargo is suspected of having discharged perchlorate waste that has adversely affected water quality. This evidence supports the requirement for an investigation, as defined in Section 13267(b)(1) of the California Water Code.

Deadlines

By July 31, 2003, a report containing the following information shall be submitted to the Regional Board staff:

1. A detailed description of Contractors Cargo's past and present operations in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins, including but not limited to, whether and when it used or handled perchlorate or perchlorate-containing materials and the approximate quantities of such materials; the operations, processes and activities involving perchlorate and perchlorate-containing materials, including testing and waste disposal practices; whether materials, off-spec or defective materials, or other wastes were burned or buried; any known or suspected discharges of perchlorate; any accidents, explosions or fires that may have occurred; and any other information that would be helpful in determining whether a discharge of perchlorate occurred from Contractors Cargo's operations.



June 26, 2003

2. Any documents pertaining to and/or describing Contractors Cargo's operations in Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins, including but not limited to maps, plans, diagrams and photographs of the facility and its operations, records pertaining to perchlorate and perchlorate-containing materials, waste disposal records, operating procedures, environmental investigation and remediation reports, and employee lists.

**Failure to submit the required information by the specified deadline will subject you to administrative civil liability in the amount of up to \$1,000 per day pursuant to Section 13268(a) and (b) of the California Water Code.**

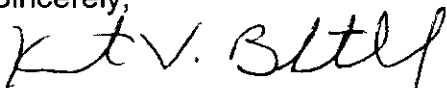
Finally, please be aware that the Board has directed staff to explore alternative ways of solving the water supply problem in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Groundwater Subbasins. In addition, consistent with the Board's direction, we have issued and will continue to issue similar directives to a number of other suspected dischargers who have operated in the Rialto, Colton and Chino Subbasins. Thus, there may be opportunities to cooperate with other entities to implement joint investigations or to propose solutions that would address the water supply problem. In fact, we believe it would be both scientifically effective and economically efficient for the suspected dischargers subject to these directives to jointly pursue the investigation and to explore water supply replacement options. Further, consistent with the Board's direction, we recommend that the joint efforts of the suspected dischargers consider both the characterization of the contamination and initiation of water supply replacement or treatment strategies. Board staff has experience in managing similar joint investigations and cooperative solutions. If you are interested in discussing such joint efforts, please contact us to arrange a meeting.

#### Recovery of Regional Board Expenses

California Water Code Section 13365 addresses the billing process for the Regional Board to recover reasonable expenses for overseeing investigation of illegal discharges, contaminated properties, and other unregulated releases that may adversely affect the State's waters. It is the Regional Board's intent to recover such costs for regulatory oversight work conducted in accordance with this order. A description of the Board's procedure for cost recovery for regulatory oversight of investigations and cleanups will be sent to you under separate cover.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Kamron Saremi at (909) 782-4303 or you may call Ann Sturdivant, Chief of our Spills, Leaks, Investigations and Cleanups Section, at (909) 782-4904.

Sincerely,



for Gerard J. Thibeault  
Executive Officer

*California Environmental Protection Agency*



Recycled Paper

Enclosures:

1. Well Location Map, showing reported perchlorate contamination in municipal water supply wells and the Rialto-Colton and Chino groundwater basins.
2. Application – Contractor's Cargo Company, San Bernardino County Planning Commission dated June 25, 1971.
3. Mailing List.

cc w/out enclosures:

Regional Board members

Jorge Leon, Office of Chief Counsel, SWRCB

Wayne Praskins, U.S. EPA, Region IX

Inland Empire Perchlorate Task Force members (mailing list attached)



California Department of Health Services  
464 W. Fourth St., Ste. 437  
San Bernardino, CA 92402

Anthony Araiza  
West Valley Water District  
P.O. Box 920  
Rialto, CA 92377-0920

Wendy Arano  
California Dept. of Toxic Substances Control  
Geology & Corrective Action Branch  
5796 Corporate Ave.  
Cypress, CA 90630

Ken Ayers  
County of San Bernardino  
Office of the District Attorney  
412 W. Hospitality Lane, Ste. 301  
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0023

Karen Baker  
California Dept. of Toxic Substances Control  
Geology & Corrective Action Branch  
5796 Corporate Ave.  
Cypress, CA 90630

Brad Baxter  
City of Rialto  
Public Works Department  
P. O. Box 920  
Rialto, CA 92736

Gerald J. Black  
Fontana Water Company  
P.O. Box 987  
Fontana, CA 92335

Mike Bledsoe  
California Integrated Waste Management  
P.O. Box 4025  
Sacramento, CA 95812-4025

Bob Borzelleri  
California Dept. of Toxic Substances Control  
P.O. Box 806  
Sacramento, CA 95812-0806

Christine Brown  
California Dept. of Toxic Substances Control  
Geology & Corrective Action Branch  
5796 Corporate Ave.  
Cypress, CA 90630

Jim Bryson  
Fontana Water Company  
P.O. Box 987  
Fontana, CA 92335

Jerry Eagans  
West Valley Water District  
P.O. Box 920  
Rialto, CA 92377-0920

Steven Elie  
Musick, Peeler & Garrett  
One Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3383

Cindy Forbes  
California Department of Health Services  
Drinking Water Field Operations Branch  
1040 E. Herndon Ave., Ste. 205  
Fresno, CA 93720

Peter Fox  
City of Rialto  
Public Works Department  
P. o. Box 920  
Rialto, CA 92736

Eric Fraser  
City of Colton  
Public Utilities Department  
650 N. La Cadena Drive  
Colton, CA 92324-2897

Barry C. Groveman  
Musick, Peeler & Garrett  
624 S. Grand Ave., Suite 2000  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3383

Patrick J. King  
Thirty-second Senatorial District TEST 1  
822 N. Euclid Ave., Suite A  
Ontario, CA 91762

Jorge Leon  
California State Water Resources Control Board  
Legal Division  
1001 "I" Street, 22nd Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Francis D. Logan, Jr.  
Law Offices of Susan M. Trager  
19712 MacArthur Blvd., Ste. 120  
Irvine, CA 92612

Leon Long  
West Valley Water District  
P.O. Box 920  
Rialto, CA 92377-0920

Mike McGraw  
Fontana Water Company  
P.O. Box 987  
Fontana, CA 92335

Tim Mim Mack  
City of Rialto  
P. O. Box 920  
Rialto, CA 92376

Matt Mitguard  
U.S. EPA, Region IX (Region 9)  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Sarah Mueller  
U. S. EPA - Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Karen A. O'Hare  
California State Water Resources Control Board  
Legal Division  
1001 "I" Street, 22nd Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Robert Owen  
City of Rialto  
P. O. Box 920  
Rialto, CA 92376

Dennis Parfitt  
California State Water Resources Control Board  
Division of Clean Water Programs  
1001 "I" Street, 22nd Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Wayne Praskins  
U. S. EPA - Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Tim Ryan  
San Gabriel Valley Water Company  
Fontana Water Company  
11142 E. Garvey Ave.  
El Monte, CA 91732

Tom Soto  
PS Enterprises  
3350 Ocean Park Blvd., Ste. 205  
Santa Monica, CA 92405

Nell Soto  
Thirty-second Senatorial District  
The Honorable Senator Nell Soto  
State Capital, Room 4074  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Lynn Takaichi  
Kennedy/Jenks Consultants, Inc.  
1000 Hill Rd., Suite 200  
Ventura, CA 93003

Gene Tanaka, Esq.  
Best, Best & Kreiger  
3750 University Ave., Mission Square  
Riverside, CA 92501

Gary Tavetian  
California Office of the Attorney General  
300 S. Spring St., Ste. 500 N.  
Los Angeles, CA 90013-1204

Susan M. Trager  
Law Offices of Susan M. Trager  
19712 MacArthur Blvd., Ste. 120  
Irvine, CA 92612

Mike Whitehead  
Fontana Water Company  
P.O. Box 987  
Fontana, CA 92335

Michael Wochnick  
California Integrated Waste Management  
P.O. Box 4025  
Sacramento, CA 95812-4025

Glen Yabuno  
County of San Bernardino  
Specialized Prosecutions Unit  
412 W. Hospitality Lane, Ste. 301  
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0023

Robert Young  
San Gabriel Valley Water Company  
Fontana Water Company  
11142 E. Garvey Ave.  
El Monte, CA 91732

Aaron Yue  
California Dept. of Toxic Substances Control  
Geology & Corrective Action Branch  
5796 Corporate Ave.  
Cypress, CA 90630